



Rural Crime Prevention



Property crime on U.S. farms is increasing, with serious financial and personal losses for farmers. Isolation, ease of access and the portable nature of livestock and equipment make farms an inviting target for thieves, vandals and other criminals.

Primary responsibility for crime prevention on farms rests with property owners and this website suggests ways you can reduce the risks on your property. Some suggestions may not suit your situation. Use your own judgment to work out what you need to do to avoid the loss, inconvenience and anxiety associated with crime on farms.

One of the biggest obstacles police face in dealing with crime on farms is the lack of reporting of crimes by farmers. If the police do not hear about a crime, there is little they can do. If people do not report crimes, offenders will get away with whatever they have done and will be encouraged to do it again. It is true police are busy, but they are never too busy to deal with a crime no matter how trivial you think it is. Often police will find incidences of petty crime in a particular area can present a pattern, and they then can develop a plan to deal with it.

In the last few years, illegal dumping has become a major problem for farmers. The illegal dump site can be dangerous and very expensive to clean up. Many times, the illegal dumper will leave old tires, household trash, automobile and other vehicles, hazardous chemicals, and even the remains of clandestine drug laboratories. All land with open access is vulnerable to the illegal dumper, and there is no concern for damage to farmland, wildlife, livestock, or the environment.

To compound this, the cost to the farmer or land owner, may be very expensive, depending on the types of waste material that have to be removed from the property.

What can be done to stop this?

The Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs offer many suggestions of things farmers can do to protect the livelihood. These suggestions may not fit every farm and situation, but should give you a good idea of what you need to do to protect your farm. Use your own good judgment and choose from brochures shown in the table on the right-side of the page.

Brochures

[Farmhouse Security](#)

[Farm Machinery Theft](#)

[Fuel Tank Security](#)

[Identification of Farm Machinery, Tools, and Equipment](#)

[General Farm Security](#)

[Illegal Dumping](#)

[Livestock Theft](#)

[Reporting Crimes to the Police](#)

Guides

[Rural Security Planning - Purdue Univ](#)

[USDA Pre-Harvest Security Guidelines and Checklist](#)

Links

[Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs](#)